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cord that binds the soul and body together is frayed and breaking, and life is ebbing away—what will it matter to us then that we have been clad daintily, that Science has been our guide, or that Art has surrounded our lives with all that is fair and pleasant? Better far, if out of the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death we hear a voice speaking to us words like these: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

ARTHUR DUDLEY VINTON.

VIII.

COLONEL INGERSOLL ON CHRISTIANITY.

COLONEL INGERSOLL's opinion of Christ is, of course, of great value to the world but it would have been in better taste had he trusted to his admirers to draw the comparison with which he favors us when he applies to Christ words ostensibly quoted from some attack upon himself. Christ was indeed also a "reformer" and an "infidel," but there was nothing "cruel in his treatment of the belief of others."

It is there that the resemblance ends.

Christ, indeed, came "not to bring peace but a sword." He did most truly war against the belief of others with a calm persistence that bespoke his high purpose; but it was not to throw down their gods and leave their temples desolate; to overthrow the result of ages of groping for the cause of things and leave the world helpless, like a child crying in the dark. If he destroyed their gods it was to give them that which symbolized more adequately the Truth,—that is, the Power of the Spirit. More than that, he was too wise a teacher to attempt, witness his own words quoted by John (chap. xvi.), "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot *bear* them now."

In his day the world had outgrown the purely sensuous religion of the Greeks, and a glimmer of the possibility of a spiritual side to man's nature had begun to break through the aura of popular thought. Yet, because men had found their feet was not to him a reason for leaving them in their weakness to learn the way alone. Instead of that support they had outgrown he gave another, lest they should faint and fall by the way. He never said, "There is no God," but, there is but one God in whom is all the power of your many gods vested.

For the Jew, who already had the revelation, he carried it a step further when he declared the right of all men to salvation, and for all he prepared the way for the evolution of the whole Truth by giving to the world precepts whose practice would serve to subordinate the brute side of man's nature and foster the spiritual side, through which only can the truth be perceived. It is by symbols that we learn; it is by faintly realized ideals that we form new ones. If the gifted Colonel would but remember that the world is yet young, that it needs still its pictures and its stories of its Bayards and its Richard of the Lion Heart—although the period of Santa Claus and the ogres and the fairy prince have been outgrown—to help it to believe in the truth of those ideals which it evolves as its grows, each purer than the last!

Let him remember that he and others like him, to whom has been vouchsafed the comprehension of a portion of the truth, bear the same relation to their fellows as the Jews to the Pagans. Let him, then, have patience with those who creep because he can walk erect. Let him imitate the man he professes to admire, and if he has a better crutch to give the man who limps along the path that he has come, let him give it him in the name of mercy; but let him stay his hand from breaking that which serves, however inadequately, to help the wretch to gain that point where his weakness and deformity may be changed to strength.

L. R. ZERBE.